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THE IMPACT OF IBN TAIMIYYA ON SOUTH ASIA

KHALIQ AHMAD NIZAMI
Formerly Professor of History, Aligarh Muslim University

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Ibn Taimiyya (661–728/1263–1327) is one of the most dynamic and seminal personalities in the history of Islam. Born in an age which, to use Toynbee's words, was characterized by 'schism of the soul' and 'schism of the body politic', he struggled hard to revive Muslim society through inward animation and re-interpretation of its values in the light of a new spirit of *ijtihād* (interpretation of law) based on direct recourse to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. He therefore reacted most forcefully to the political decadence and social chaos which followed the irruption of the Mongols. He was born five years after Hūlagū's sack of Baghdad and was in his teens when the Mongol storm inundated the eastern world of Islam. He struggled hard to turn the tide. When he breathed his last in 1327, Muslim and Mongol principalities existed side by side in Central Asia, the Ilkhans had stabilized their position in Persia and the Mongol tribes were converting to Islam. Much of this had been due to the efforts of Ibn Taimiyya. He came to be hailed as the *mujaddid*[1] of his age.[2] His thought influenced not only his contemporaries in the Muslim heartlands but reached far beyond: Muḥammad bin Tughluq (1325–1351) the Sulṭān of Delhi, for example, became an ardent advocate of his ideology and sought to restructure political institutions in its light; many Muslim reform movements in the 18th and 19th centuries drew some degree of inspiration from him; in recent history his thought supplied *élan* to the movements for political liberation in South Asia. Surprisingly, no attempt has so far been made to assess the impact of his ideology on South Asia.

[1] The word *mujaddid* means 'reformer' or 'regenerator'. A tradition of the Prophet cited by Abū Dawūd says: 'God will, on the eve of every century, raise a person in this *ummat* who would renew Islam.' See also Shah Wālī Allah, *Izalat al-Khafa an Khilafat al-Khulafa*, (Bareilly, AH 1286), 271, for a discussion about *mujaddids* of different periods.

[2] Siddiq Hasan Khan, *Ḥajjāj al-Karāma fī Athār al-Qayyāma* (n.d.), 136–7; *Maqālat-i Shiblī* (Azamgarh, 1955), V, 62.

LIFE OF IBN TAIMIYYA

Ibn Taimiyya[3] was born at Ḥarrān (near Damascus) on 22 January 1263, in a family known for academic attainment. The nature and reach of his reformist activity—both at the political and ideological level—can only be appreciated in the context of the Mongol invasions which had brought down the medieval Muslim state-system and torn up the fabric of Muslim civilization. Against that background of Mongol threat Ibn Taimiyya's father decided, sometime in 1268, to leave Ḥarrān and settle in Damascus. A decade earlier Baghdad had been sacked by Hūlagū and Muslim political prestige touched its nadir. A few small states clung to a melancholy existence but with destruction imminent. The sheer number of Ibn Taimiyya's teachers (some 200) reflects the unstable conditions in which he had to complete his education. Significantly, one of those teachers was a learned lady called Zainab.[4] At the age of seventeen he started instructing students, giving legal verdicts (*fatāwā*) and writing books. He remained a celibate throughout his life. In 1282, on the death of his father, he was appointed professor in Ḥanbali law. His soul was stirred to its depths at the spectacle of the loss of Muslim political power,[5] and he took it upon himself to mobilize Muslims for *jihād* against the Mongols.[6] He found the Muslim society of his day demoralised, superstitious, and indolent, and commended the strictest measures to revitalise it. Some of his views brought him into conflict with the '*ulamā*' and the mystics of his day. He went to Cairo to muster support for his anti-Mongol movement. He was imprisoned several times—in Damascus, Cairo, Alexandria and other places—for his views, but nothing could dampen his spirit. He criticised vehemently the un-Islamic accretions and attitudes of sects as well as individuals. He returned to Damascus after some eight years in Cairo, some of which were spent in an underground prison cell. A letter written to his mother from Cairo shows the depth of his commitment to his cause.[7] A prolific writer, he

[3] For his life see: Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* (Hyderabad, AH 1334), IV, 288; Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Bulaq, AH 1299), al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-Shāf'iyya* (Cairo, AH 1324), V, 81–212; Ibn al-Wārsdī, *Tarīkh* (Cairo, AH 1285, II, 254 f; Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, *al-Fatāwā al-Hadīthiya* (Cairo, AH 1307, 86 f; al-Suyūṭī, *Tabaqāt al-Huffāz* (n.d.). Among recent works, Muḥammad Abū Zahra, *Ibn Taimiyya: Hayatuhu wa 'Asruhu* (Cairo, 1952); Muhammad Yūsuf Kokan 'Umari, *Imām Ibn Taimiyya* (Urdu) (Madras, 1959).

[4] Shiblī, *Maqālat-i Shiblī*, v, 64.

[5] Ibn Taimiyya's political ideas appear in detail in the two works, *Minhāj al-Sunnah* (Bulaq, AH 1322) and *Siyasat al-Sharī'ah* (Egypt, AH 1322). See also H. Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques d'Ibn Taimiya (Cairo, 1939).*

[6] He participated personally in some of the campaigns against the Mongols. He fought the battle of Shaqhab, near Damascus.

[7] Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwī, *Tarīkh-i Da'wat wa Azīmat* (Azamgarh, 1957), ii, 84–8.

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produced numerous books and brochures in defence of his views, even when in prison. In utter desperation his opponents had him deprived of pen and ink. Disarmed and dismayed, he tried to write something in coal.[8] However, he was unable to long survive the cruel order which denied to his revolutionary zeal the outlet it needed in writing. Within twenty days, he breathed his last in the prison on 20 Dhū l-Qaʿda 728/1327. His funeral prayer was read several times in Damascus and *in absentia* at a number of places in different parts of the Muslim world, even China. Ibn Taimiyya's movement did not die with him. It became a force thereafter and was carried to different regions by his admirers and followers. It provided a prop to political systems, sustained freedom movements and activized the spirit of fresh interpretation of religious law. *Jihād* at the political and *ijtihād* at the intellectual level became the inspiring motives of his movement for the regeneration of Muslim society.

IBN TAIMIYYA'S THOUGHT

It is not necessary to discuss here all aspects of Ibn Taimiyya's thought, but reference may be made to some of his ideological positions in order to follow their impact in South Asia:

(a) Ibn Taimiyya believed in *ijtihād*[9] (fresh interpretation of religious law) and considered himself *mujtahid fī al-madhab*.[10] His *Majmūʿat al-Rasāʾil al-Kubrā* reflects his views on *ijmaʿ* (consensus of Muslim learned opinion), *qiyās* (analogical inference) etc.

(b) He interpreted Qurʾānic verses with an anthropomorphic reference literally.[11]

(c) He opposed innovations in religious matters (*bidʿāt*).[12] This brought him into conflict with a number of sects, like Ashʿarīs,

[8] Two of his letters written with coal have been reproduced by Ibn al-Hādī in *al-ʿUqūd al-Durriya* (Cairo, 1938), 365–7.

[9] For Ibn Taimiyya's views on the subject, see *Fatāwā-i Ibn Taimiyya*, (Egypt, AH 1329), ii, 376–8, 404–5. Ibn Qayyim has explained those views at length in his book *Aʿlam al-Muwaqaʿin* (Munirya, Cairo, AH 1325), iv.

[10] See Marʿi b. Yūsuf al-Karmī, *al-Kawākib al-Durriya fī Manāqib Ibn Taimiyya* (Cairo, AH 1329), 184 f, where the author refers to certain matters in which Ibn Taimiyya refused *taqlīd* (adherence to established position) and concurrence with *ijmāʿ* (consensus of Muslim learned opinion).

[11] See *Majmūʿat al-Rasāʾil al-Kubra* (Sharfiya Press, Egypt, AH 1323), i, 387 f. See also, Muhammad Yūsuf Kokan, *Imām Ibn Taimiyya* (Madras, 1959), pp. 178–84, for a summary.

[12] See his *Majmuʿat al-Rasāʾil al-Kubra*, ii, 177–8.

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Ismāʿīlīs, Kharajīs, Rāfiḍīs, Qadirīs, Muʿtazilīs, Jahmīs, Karrāmīs and others.[13]

(d) He criticized many practices prevalent among the mystics of his day as un-Islamic accretions.

(e) He criticized Shaikh Muḥī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī for his doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of the noumenal and the phenomenal).

(f) He considered illegal all journeys undertaken to visit shrines.

(g) He considered admissible the levy of taxes by the state over and above those laid down by God. However, he exempted those who paid such taxes from payment of *zakāt*.

(h) He believed that it was imperative to have an *imām* to regulate and direct the life of the community and give it cohesion, unity and discipline, even when political power was in non-Muslim hands.

(i) He believed in unified and integrated community life without any separation between religion and politics.

Whether in prison or in *madrasah*, Ibn Taimiyya's sole concern was to awaken Muslim masses from their stupor, to remove their confusion of mind, inspire them with the spirit of *ijtihād* to meet the challenge of the time, and to take them to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as the safest guides in moments of trial and turmoil. A reformer determined to rejuvenate a whole society could not but come into conflict with a number of elements that obstructed his progress. Ibn Taimiyya refused to accept the Sufis' stance to the effect that, as state and religion had different paths, they could have nothing to do with politics. Such an approach would render his whole mission fruitless. He had to mobilize all the talents of all the community in order to deal with its social, ideological and political problems. Anxious to strengthen mosques as the lynch-pin of Muslim community-life, he criticized the construction of *khānqāhs*, *zāwiyahs* and *jamʿat khānāhs* as innovations.

EARLY SIGNS OF IMPACT ON SOUTH ASIA

Circumstantial evidence shows that even during the early phase of Ibn Taimiyya's career, India did not remain ignorant of the religious trends initiated by him, though their actual application was varied and sporadic. During the time of Ibn Taimiyya's struggle against the Mongols, Balban (1266–1287), 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī (1296–1316) and Muḥammad

[13] See Marʿi, *al-Kawākib*, 165; Abū Zahrā, *Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taimiyya*, 170 f. In 1303 he fought against the people of Jabal Kasrawan in Syria, including Ismāʿīlīs, Hākimis, etc. He wrote a pamphlet against the Ittihādiya.

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bin Tughluq (1325–1351) were on the throne of Delhi and all of them were carrying on a determined struggle against the Mongols. There is direct evidence of Muḥammad bin Tughluq's admiration for Ibn Taimiyya's ideas; and indirect, circumstantial evidence of the impact of those ideas on others. Given the nature of political and intellectual contacts between South Asia and (as it is now called) the Middle East, it is improbable that these Sulṭāns did not know of the defence strategies evolved in other Muslim lands which had suffered from the Mongols. Balban gave shelter to many scholars who had been hunted out of their homelands by the Mongols.[14] He named fifteen quarters in the capital after these refugees.[15] Among his favourite *'ulamā'* were pupils of Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī,[16] Maulānā Burhān al-Dīn Marghinānī[17] (author of *Hidāya*), and Maulānā Rāzī al-Dīn Ḥasan Saghānī (author of *Mashāriq al-Anwār*).[18] In such circumstances Delhi could hardly have remained ignorant of attempts being made in the contemporary Muslim world to meet the Mongol threat. During the reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī, South Asia could boast of having sheltered many eminent scholars of Central Asia and Persia. Referring to the intellectual achievements of the age of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī, Baranī says that books written outside India were accepted as authoritative only when the scholars of Delhi approved them.[19] The Sultān had diplomatic relations with the Ilkhāns and had welcomed Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allah[20], the famous historian and scholar of the age. Despite all his shortcomings, 'Alā' al-Dīn had established an efficient administration of the Muslim institution of *ḥisba*[21] (control of public standards of morality, law and order). According to Baranī, the Emperor would say: 'If I punish a thief or an adulterer or a drunkard, it is not because he has done any wrong to me, but because I follow the path of the Prophets.'[22] He dealt with the Ibāḥatīs (who had legalized certain immoral practices) in the same religious spirit.[23] During his reign Maulānā Shams al-Dīn Turk came to Multān from Egypt and brought with him four hundred books on *aḥādīth* eager to establish the science of their study in South Asia.[24] Some writers think that he was no other

[14] See K. A. Nizami, *Salātīn-i-Dehli kay Madhabī Rujhānāt* (Delhi, 1958), 182.

[15] Ferishta, *Tarīkh-i Ferishta,* (Nawal Kishore, AH 1281), i, 75.

[16] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi* (Calcutta, 1860), 46.

[17] Hasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* (Nawal Kishore, AH 1302), 238–9. 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī, *Akhbār al-Akhyār* (Delhi, AH 1309), 45–6.

[18] *ibid.*

[19] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāh*, 355.

[20] See K. A. Nizami, 'Rashīd al-Dīn Fazl Allah and India' in *Rashīd al-Dīn Fazl Allah: Commemoration Volume* (Tehran, AH 1350), 36–53.

[21] See I. H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (Lahore, 1942), 45, 157.

[22] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 296.

[23] *ibid.*; Amīr Khusrau, *Khazā'in al-Futūh* (Calcutta, 1953), 20.

[24] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 297.

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than Maulānā Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Hawerī who had been a *qāḍī* in Egypt but dismissed from office on account of his committment to Ibn Taimiyya's views.[25]

Contact with the Islamic world intensified during the Tughluq period. Some identical trends in religious thought in South Asia and the Middle East illustrate the extent of that contact.

While discussing the legality of music in a *maḥẓar* meeting convened by Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq (1320–1325), the well-known Chishtī saint Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā quoted a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, but the '*ulamā*' of Delhi refused to listen to him and said: 'We want the verdict of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa, not a tradition of the Prophet'. The Shaikh, distressed, remarked that a city in which the '*ulamā*' refuse to listen to the traditions of the Prophet, is doomed.[26] Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā may have arrived at his belief in *ijtihād* entirely independently, but it is interesting that he should have come to a line of religious thinking so similar to the one that had inspired Ibn Taimiyya. This led Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, the most ardent South Asian advocate of Ibn Taimiyya's views in recent years, to suggest that there was an identity of approach between Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā and Ibn Taimiyya. He writes: 'In this matter Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taimiyya agrees with Niẓam[al-Dīn] Auliyā.'[27]

One of the scholars who supported Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā at the *maḥẓar* meeting was Maulānā 'Alam al-Dīn, a grandson of Shaikh Bahā al-Dīn Zakariyyā of Multān, who was known for his extensive travels in Muslim lands.[28] Some later writers consider him an advocate of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology,[29] but contemporary records contain nothing on this point.

Influence on Muḥammad bin Tughluq

With the accession to power of Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Tughluq (1325–1351) positive historical evidence does become available about the influence of Ibn Taimiyya in South Asia. 'Abd al-'Azīz Ardbailī, a pupil of the Shaikh al-Islām, visited the court of the Sulṭān. According to Ibn

[25] Abū Zahra, *Hayāt-i Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taimiyya* (Lahore, 1971), Urdu translator's preface, 4.

[26] Mīr Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā* (Delhi, AH 1302), 531.

[27] Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *Tiqsār Juyūd al-Ahrār min Tizkār Junūd al-Abrār* (Bhopal 1295/1878), p. 136.

[28] Mīr Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 528–30. Baranī calls him 'a world of knowledge and learning', *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 354.

[29] See Urdu translator's preface to Abū Zahra's *Ḥayāt-i Shaikh al-Islām*, 5.

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Baṭṭūṭa, Muḥammad bin Tughluq was so impressed by his views that he kissed his feet in the open durbar.[30] If Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had not informed us about ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ardbailī's visit to, and his reception at, the court of Muḥammad bin Tughluq, we would have remained in the dark about the motive that inspired the Sulṭān's religious and political activities. Of all the Sulṭāns of Delhi, Muḥammad bin Tughluq had the most intimate knowledge of the political and ideological developments in the Islamic world beyond Indian frontiers. His responses to these developments were quite in accord with the views of Ibn Taimiyya—the following actions, in particular, bear the unmistakable stamp of Ibn Taimiyya's thought:

(1) The Sulṭān's declaration—'State and Religion are twins',[31] clearly echoes Ibn Taimiyya's ideas. The Sulṭān firmly rejected any separation between state and religion, as advocated by the mystics. This is exemplified in the correspondence he had with foreign powers: for example, Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd to Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Tughluq, obviously wanting to demonstrate his commitment to the same ideology, writes:

> According to [the maxim] 'Religion and State are twins', [I] have always considered state essential for religion, and religion the cause of the permanence of the state.[32]

The Chishtī saints had given wide berth to the government of the day and warned their senior disciples against consorting with kings, accepting their endowments or indulging in *shughl* (government service).[33] They believed that after the *Khilāfat-i Rāshida* the paths of religion and state had separated, and serving the state was no longer identical with serving the religion.

Muḥammad bin Tughluq opposed this ideological stance of the mystics and forced them to make their services available to the state. He extricated many younger saints of distinguished mystic families from the *khānqāhs* and obliged them to serve the state. Shaikh Muiʿzz al-Dīn and Shaikh ʿAlam al-Dīn who belonged to the renowned mystic house of Ajodhān, were entrusted with administrative responsibilities. Shaikh Muiʿzz al-Dīn was sent to Gujarat but failed to control the situation

[30] Ibn Baṭṭūta, *Reḥla* (Cairo, 1928), ii, 44.

[31] Mīr Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 196.

[32] *Bayāż-i Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad Wazīr*, ed. Iraj Afshar and Murtaża Taimuri (University of Isfahan Publication, Chapkhana Bahman, AH 1353), 410.

[33] For a detailed discussion of the ideological and other considerations that prompted the Chishtī saints to adopt this attitude towards the government of the day, see K. A. Nizami's article 'Early Indo-Muslim mystics and their attitude towards the State', *Islamic Culture* xxii–xxiv (Oct. 1948, Jan. 1950).

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there and was killed by the rebels.[34] Shaikh 'Alam al-Dīn was appointed Shaikh al-Islām[35] with the responsibility of looking after the religious classes. While the Chishtīs joined government service under duress, the mystics of the Suhrawardī order did so of their free will.[36] To break the isolationist attitude of the Chishti mystics the Sulṭān married his daughter into a well-known Sufi family of Nagaur.[37]

Inspired by the ideas of Ibn Taimiyya, he was anxious to return to an integrated approach to religion and state as had developed under the Pious Caliphs. His views were, however, distorted by others and his motivations became subject to doubt and distrust. The following two instances illustrate the nature of the misrepresentation:

(a) Ibn Baṭṭūṭa writes:[38]

When Sultān Muḥammad became the ruler, he adopted the practice of assigning *khidmat* to jurists, saints and pious people, and in support of this practice cited the rulers of the first century [*khulafā-i Rāshidīn*] who never assigned any work to one who was not a scholar or a wise man.

The significance of the word *khidmat* was missed by later writers who twisted it to mean that the Sulṭān expected 'personal' services, like those of attendants, keepers of royal wardrobes, etc.[39] However, reference to 'the rulers of the first century' makes it clear that the service meant was to the state not to an individual, and that the Sulṭān regarded this as a return to the practice that prevailed during the time of the *khulafā-i Rāshidīn*.

(b)The *Jawāmi' al-Kalīm* informs us that the Sultān would say: 'What have Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Ali done which we cannot do?'[40] This was not vain bluster, rather assertion of an ideological aspiration.

[34] Mīr Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 196. [35] *ibid.*, 196–7.

[36] If it be accepted, though no contemporary evidence on this point is available, that Shaikh 'Ālam al-Dīn, grandson of Shaikh Baha al-Dīn Zakariyya of Multan, had come under the influence of the teachings of Ibn Taimiyya, the relations of the Suhrawardi saints with Sultān Muhammad bin Tughluq can be very neatly explained. Shaikh Rukn al-Dīn Multāni's support to the Sultān in his various measures, his acceptance of the title of *Shaikh al-Islām* etc, indicate his close association with the Sultān in the implementation of his policies. For a detailed discussion, see the author's article 'The Suhrawardi Silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics' *Medieval India Quarterly* (Aligarh, July–Oct 1957), iii, 109–49.

[37] K. A. Nizami, 'Some Documents of Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq' *Medieval India: A Miscellany* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969), i, 307.

[38] Ibn Battūta *Rehla*, ii, 54.

[39] e.g. Mīr 'Abd al-Wāhid Bilgrāmi, *Saba' Sanabil* (Kanpur, AH 1299), 64–5; *Tarīkh-i Farishta*, ii, 399; 'Abd al-Raḥmān Chishtī, *Mir'at al-Asrār* (MS): Muhammad Bulaq Chishtī declared all such stories a tissue of lies. See his *Maṭlūb al-Tālibīn* (MS).

[40] Sayyid Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusaini, *Jawāmi' al-Kalīm* (Intizami Press, Kanpur, AH 1356), 175–6.

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The Sulṭān wished to emphasize that it was taking the wrong attitude to say that we cannot do what the Pious Caliphs had done and sit back helpless. Their ideals should be followed as *active* principles of life. No claim of equality was implied in the Sulṭān's assertion, rather a desire to emulate them as models of conduct.

When the Sulṭān put forward these views, he was grossly misunderstood and fiercely maligned. The contemporary historian Baranī charged him with *taḥakkumāt-i mujaddiyya*[41] (innovatory injunctions) and said that 'he wanted to combine kingship with prophethood'.[42] Nothing could be further from the truth. What the Sulṭān had aimed at was bridging the gulf between religion and politics as advised by Ibn Taimiyya.

(2) Ibn Taimiyya had mobilized opinion against the Mongols and preached *jihād* against them. From Damascus to Alexandria he had created a powerful resistance movement against the Mongol occupation of Muslim lands. Muḥammad bin Tughluq implemented that policy in South Asia. He called himself *Abū al-Mujāhid*,[43] and exhorted people for *jihād* against the Mongols. Mīr Khurd informs us:

In those days he [Sulṭān Muhammad bin Tughluq] wanted to control the lands of Turkistān and Khurāsān and overthrow the descendants of Chengiz Khān. All the élite and elders of Delhi[44] and those living in adjoining areas were asked to be present. A huge tent was put up and under it a pulpit was placed. He sat on this pulpit and persuaded people to prepare for *jihād* ... and said: I want to overthrow the descendants of Chengiz Khān. You should cooperate with me in this struggle.[45]

The correspondence between Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd and Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Tuqhluq, as available in *Bayāż-i Tāj al-Dīn Wazīr*,[46] shows that both were anxious to evolve a common strategy for meeting the Mongol menace.

(3) The Sulṭān strictly enforced the *iḥtisāb* regulations as enjoined by the *Sharī'a* law and as insisted upon by Ibn Taimiyya. Himself punctilious in the performance of obligatory prayers and in observing fast,[47] he

[41] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 457. [42] *ibid.*, 459.

[43] K. A. Nizami, 'Some Documents of Sultān Muhammad bin Tughluq' in *Medieval India*, i, 308; Badr-i-Chach, *Qaṣā'id Badr-i-Chach* (Nawal Kishore, AH 1279), 2, 20, etc. Also *Bayāż-i Tāj al-Dīn Ahmad Wazīr*, 41, wherein Sultān Abū Sa'īd addresses him as *Sulṭān-i-Azam Mujāhid-i 'Ādil*.

[44] Eminent saints of Delhi, like Shaikh Nāsir al-Dīn Chirāgh, Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarradī, and Maulānā Shams al-Dīn Yahyā were present at this meeting.

[45] Mīr Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 271–2.

[46] Afshar and Taimuri (eds.), *Bayāż-i Tāj al-Dīn Ahmad Wazīr*, 406–9.

[47] Barani, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 460. See also K. A. Nizami, *Ṣalātīn-i Dehli kay Madhabi Rujhanāt*, 329.

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banned wine and issued prohibitionary orders.[48] Whoever disregarded *Sharī'a* laws in this regard, whether noble or a commoner, was taken to task. People were asked to be regular in the performance of their obligatory prayers. Those found loitering in the bazar after the call for prayers (*adhān*), were punished. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa informs us:

The Sulṭān's order was that everybody should learn *namāz* and essentials of faith. So people were found committing to memory *namāz* in the bazars and getting these written on papers.[49]

When the Sulṭān entered the women's quarters, all women with whom *Sharī'a* law prescribes seclusion, were removed from his sight.[50]

(4) Muḥammad bin Tughluq's concept of *khilāfa* was also deeply influenced by the views of Ibn Taimiyya. He considered recognition of authority by the *khalīfa* an essential and indispensable legal requirement. Those who failed to obtain this recognition were 'usurpers' in his opinion.[51] So, pending caliphal recognition of his authority, he stopped Friday and 'Īd prayers in his realms.[52] Not realizing the significance of this order people considered it an interference in religion.[53] In the same spirit, the Sulṭān stopped inscribing his own name on the coins and inscribed on them only the name of the *khalīfa*.[54] When the *farmān* was received from the Caliph in Cairo,[55] the Sulṭān took *bay't* (oath of fealty) from people with the Qur'ān and the *Mashāriq al-Anwār* placed before him.[56]

(5) Many of Muḥammad bin Tughluq's actions, like those of Ibn Taimiyya, reflected an anxiety to revive the traditions of the Prophet in every walk of life. He was quite aware of this role: his coins pronounced him as *Muḥī-i-Sunan-i-Khātim al-Nabiyyīn*[57] (reviver of the traditions and practices of the last of the Prophets).

(6) One working under the influence of Ibn Taimiyya's ideas could not help coming into direct conflict with the ideology and institutions of the

[48] Al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al A'shā*. English translation by Otto Spies: *An Arab Account of India* (Aligarh, n.d.) 64; Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, chapter dealing with India translated into English by Otto Spies, S. A. Rashid and S. Moin al-Haq (Lahore, 1943), 52.

[49] It may be pointed out that the Qur'ān enjoins upon a Muslim ruler to ensure regular performance of congregational prayers (22: 41).

[50] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 506. [51] *ibid.*, 491. [52] *ibid.*, 492.

[53] 'Isāmi, *Futuh-al-Salātīn* (Madras, 1948), 515.

[54] H. N. Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi* (Delhi, 1936), 149–52; E. Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* (London, 1871), 259.

[55] Muhammad bin Tughluq celebrated the event with great éclat and enthusiasm. The *qasā'id* (panegyrics) on this occasion reveal the Sultān's sentiments of respect and devotion for the *khilāfa*: *Qasā'id Badr-i-Chach*, 15.

[56] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, 495. [57] H. N. Wright, *Coinage and Metrology*, 120.

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mystics. In his early years Muḥammad bin Tughluq had shown great respect to contemporary saints, but under the influence of Ibn Taimiyya his attitude changed. At his request Shaikh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā of Maner wrote two volumes elucidating the principles and practices of mysticism but the Sulṭān remained unconvinced. He asked for more elucidation but the Shaikh declined, commenting: 'he who is deprived of the real mystical norm will never known anything.'[58] Significantly enough this letter opens with the Qur'ānic verse:

It may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not. [2: 216]

The Sulṭān clashed with the Sufis on the following issues: (a) their concept of *walāya* (b) their disassociation from government service, (c) their dress and demeanour, and (d) their *khānqāh* life. The concept of *walāya* rendered it obligatory on mystics to remain rooted to the place assigned to them by their spiritual mentors.[59] Muḥammad bin Tughluq asked them to move to different parts of the country according to his directions.[60] He sent the Sufis resident in Delhi to the distant Deccan,[61] brought the Muslim élite in from adjoining areas to Delhi and settled them there.[62] He asked Maulānā Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā to move to Kashmir.[63]

Two eminent mystic houses of the time, Ajodhan and Nagaur, also felt the impact of the Sulṭān's policy. Only Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn Chirāgh, successor of Shaikh Nizām al-Dīn Auliyā, refused to move out of Delhi and bore all the hardships and punishments inflicted on him by the Sulṭān.[64]

The mystics' principle of abjuring government service was also assailed by Muḥammad bin Tughluq and Sufis were made to accept

[58] *Maktūbāt-i Sharaf al-Dīn Ahmad Maneri*, MS in Khuda Bakhsh Library Patna, letter No. 207, 216–7, as translated by A. M. Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Thacker Spink, Calcutta, 1963), 622–4.

[59] See K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961), 175–7.

[60] Mīr Khurd refers to nine saints who were ordered by the Sultān to accept government service. They were Shaikh Fakhr al-Dīn Zarradī (*Siyār al-Auliyā*, 271), Shaikh Shams al-Dīn Yaḥyā (228), Shaikh Qutb al-Dīn Munawwar (250–1), Khwaja Karīm al-Dīn Samarqandi (307), Sayyid Qutb al-Dīn Husain Kirmānī (218), Sayyid Kamal al-Dīn (215), Shaikh Mazhar al-Din (197), Shaikh Muizz al-Dīn (196), and Shaikh ʿIlm al-Dīn (197).

[61] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, p. 474.

[62] *ibid.*; Muḥammad Bihamīd Khānī, *Tarīkh-i-Muhammadī*, MS British Museum, f. 400a.

[63] Mir Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 288.

[64] For details see *Khair al-Majālis: Conversations of Shaikh Nasīr al-Dīn Chirāgh*, ed. by K. A. Nizami (Aligarh, 1959), 49–58.

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government assignments in different parts of the country. The *khānqāh* life in South Asia suffered a set-back as a result of this policy. Baranī informs us that when Muḥammad bin Tughluq died and Firūz Shah succeeded him:

The *khānqāhs* of the city and its environs, and of towns within four or five *karohs* of the city, and, in fact the whole empire, had been lying in ruins for years, no bird flew there and no thirsty man got any water there. Owing to Firūz Shah's royal favours, the keepers of *khānqāhs*, the sufis, the devotees, the *qalandārs*, the *Haideris*, the travellers and the indigent became prosperous and satisfied.[65]

According to Mīr Khurd, the Sulṭān was opposed to mystic dress and forced the sufis to give it up. If anybody showed respect to his spiritual mentor the Sulṭān angrily admonished him: 'Give up these beliefs involving heresy.'[66]

(7) Ibn Taimiyya believed in just and generous treatment of all non-Muslims (*dhimmīs*) living in a Muslim state. In a letter to the Christian ruler of Cyprus he wrote:

We people seek the welfare of all. We wish that God may bless you with the good of this and the next world, because it is the duty of one who has faith in God to wish well of His creation. The Christians will themselves bear witness to what I am saying. When I approached the Tartars for the release of the prisoners of war, their ruler Ghazān released only the Muslims and told me that they had Christians also as prisoners whom they had brought from there. 'These [Christians] will not be set free' [he said]. I told him: 'No. Besides Muslims, you should set free the Jews and the Christians also as they are our *dhimmīs*. We cannot tolerate their remaining in prison, neither in the hands of Muslims, nor non-Muslims.' So we got the Christians also liberated.[67]

Muḥammad bin Tughluq's extraordinarily good treatment of the non-Muslims clearly recalls Ibn Taimiyya's line. The Sultān gave full religious freedom to the Hindus and treated them generously. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa informs us that once a Hindu noble lodged a complaint with the *qāḍī* against the Sulṭān that he had killed his [the plaintiff's] brother without reason. The Sulṭān was summoned by the *qāḍī*, and appeared in the court without arms and, accepting the verdict of the *qāḍī*, conciliated with the Hindu noble.[68] This was an unprecedented event in the history of India at this time.

[65] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, p. 560.

[66] Mir Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 273.

[67] Ibn Taimiyya, *al-Risāla al-Qabrasya*, 22, as cited in Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Ḥayāt-i Shaikh al-Islām*, (Urdu trans.), 578.

[68] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Rehla*, ii, 52. Details of his relations with the non-Muslims may be read in K. A. Nizami *Salātīn-i Dehli kay Madhabī Rujhānāt*, 345–8.

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(8) Muḥammad bin Tughluq insisted on being called *Sulṭān al-ʿĀdil*[69] (the just ruler). One of Ibn Taimiyya's three essential conditions for legitimate exercise of political authority was that a ruler should be *Imām-i ʿĀdil*,[70] and Muḥammad bin Tughluq was anxious to fulfil this condition.

(9) Ibn Taimiyya's interest in jurisprudence and emphasis on *ijtihād* inspired the same in Muḥammad bin Tughluq. He knew the Qur'ān by heart and for all practical purposes the *Hidāyah* was on the tip of his tongue.[71] He believed in fresh interpretation according to the exigencies of the situation and had a group of *'ulamā'* always around him. With them he discussed and debated every matter; he never issued orders for the execution of anybody unless these *'ulamā'* concurred with his judgment.[72] If he failed to convince them he would immediately set free the person held in custody. He told the jurists that if anybody was unjustly executed, they would be responsible for shedding innocent blood.[73] Never before in the history of the Delhi Sultanate were intended executions thus discussed with the *'ulamā'* in the light of the *Sharīʿa*.

(10) A deep religious conviction seems to have motivated many of the Sultān's actions. He called Deogir, the second administrative city of the Empire, *Qubba-i Dīn-i Islam*[74] ('vault of the Islamic religion'). This was not without significance. He asked Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī to go to Kashmīr in order to 'sit in the idol houses and preach Islam there'.[75] His claim to be the 'reviver of the traditions of the last of the Prophets', read alongside these remarks, provides an insight into the working of his mind.

(11) Ibn Taimiyya considered rebellion against established Muslim authority injurious to public well-being. When Muḥammad bin Tughluq's various projects provoked strong reaction and the religious classes justified rebellion against him,[76] Muḥammad bin Tughluq must have derived moral support from the ideology of Ibn Taimiyya. For the first time in Indian history, coins were used to advocate loyalty to the Sultān. The inscriptions on Muḥammad bin Tughluq's coins referred to the

[69] Badaoni, *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh* (Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1864), i., 225. His coins and buildings also pronounce him as such, see Lane-Poole, *The Coins of the Sultans of Delhi in the British Museum* (London, 1884), Nos. 280–282. His fortress in Delhi was called 'Adilabad.

[70] *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, ii, 85.

[71] Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 37; Ibn Hajar Asqalānī, *al-Durrar al-Kāminah* (Hyderabad, AH 1348), iii, 460.

[72] Yaḥyā Sirhindī, *Tarīkh-i Mubārak Shāhi* (Calcutta, 1931), 115–6.

[73] *ibid.*, Badaoni, *Muntakab al-Tawārīkh*, 239.

[74] E. Thomas, *Chronicles*, 209.

[75] Mir Khurd, *Siyār al-Auliyā*, 288.

[76] 'Isami, *Futūh al-Salāṭīn*, 536.

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people's religious obligations in this respect: 'Whoever obeys the Sulṭān, obeys God' and 'Obey God, obey the Prophet and obey those with authority amongst you.'[77]

(12) Muḥammad bin Tughluq rejected all medieval concepts of the nobility of birth—something whose significance in the religious context Baranī failed to appreciate. That low born people—e.g. vinters, gardeners, weavers, etc.[78]—could rise to eminence in the state was a positive contribution of the Sulṭān to Indian polity of this period. Historians have attributed the germination of this approach to the influence of philosophy on the Sulṭān. Considered in its proper context it had its roots in the Islamic principles of equal treatment for all, as propounded by Ibn Taimiyya.

(13) Though practically all Arab writers of the period, the authors of *al-Durrar al-Kāminah, Ṣubḥ al-A'shā, al-A'yān al-'Aṣr* etc., have paid eloquent tribute to Muḥammad bin Tughluq's erudition and generosity, the account of the Sulṭān in *Masālik al-Abṣār* has a special significance. Its author Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umarī, a resident of Damascus, was a follower of Ibn Taimiyya. His appreciation of the Sulṭān's religious attitude and behaviour is, in fact, an appraisal of him in the light of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology. He expressly observes of the Sulṭān: 'He is one who does not permit the prohibited actions, nor lets anyone [have] of forbidden things and none dare commit openly in the country unlawful acts and most sternly he forbids the use of wine.'[79] Discussing the Sulṭān's various measures he says: 'the beacon of *Sharī'a* is shining on account of him'.[80] He praises his dispensation of justice most eloquently: 'Everyone who wants to approach him can reach him. Neither the greatness of the chamberlains nor their curtains can keep him back.' Summing up, Shihāb al-Dīn writes: 'he fears God in secret and in public, [and] does not commit a prohibited thing and does not yield to it.'[81]

Ẓiā al-Dīn Baranī, who seems to have been ignorant of the intellectual scene in the Islamic world at that time and known nothing about the ideology of Ibn Taimiyya, attributed Muḥammad bin Tughluq's religious attitudes and policies to the local influence of contemporary Indian philosophers, like Sa'd Manṭaqī, 'Ubaid, Najm Intashār and 'Ālim al-Dīn.[82]

Under Muḥammad bin Tughluq, the state espoused the ideology of Ibn Taimiyya. Firūz Shāh Tughluq, his successor, though deeply interested in

[77] H. N. Wright, *Coinage and Metrology*, 143; E. Thomas, *Chronicles*, 243–50.
[78] Baranī, *Tarīkh-i Firūz Shāhi*, p. 505.
[79] Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār*, 38.
[80] *ibid.*, 44.
[81] *ibid.*, 50.
[82] See K. A. Nizami, *Salatīn-i-Dehli kay Madhabī Rujhānāt, 327 f.*

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religion and strongly opposed to heretical movements and ideas, had little in common with Muḥammad bin Tughluq's views and indeed opposed some of them. The state never again came under the influence of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology whose impact turned slowly and gradually into purely religious channels.

EARLY RESPONSE TO IBN TAIMIYYA'S IDEAS

Perhaps the most outstanding religious figure of the period who responded, reacted or modified mystic attitudes in the light of the situation created by the dissemination of Ibn Taimiyya's ideas, was Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn Chirāgh of Delhi (d. 1356). He resolutely affirmed:

> The ways of a spiritual mentor cannot be cited as justification for any action. One can justify his action only on the basis of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.[83]

and rescued the mystic movement from criticism. He stopped the practice of prostration before a spiritual master[84] and forbade reverence at graves.[85].

Certain Qur'ānic verses with anthropomorphic references were the subject of bitter controversy in those days. Ibn Taimiyya who had expressed his views on this subject in his *Tafsīr-i Sūrah-i Ikhlās*[86] was criticised on that count. A visitor once tried to draw Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn Chirāgh into that controversy but the Shaikh confined himself to a very brief reply and changed the subject.[87]

Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn's views about the vision of God are clearly stated in the *Khair al-Majālis*.[88] The Shaikh believed that the vision of God is possible in this world. 'Had it not been so, Moses would not have prayed to God for it,'[89] argues the Shaikh. Ibn Taimiyya had criticised all those who believed in such a possibility.[90]

The fact that Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn was known as *Abū Ḥanīfa Thānī* can either be interpreted to mean that he adhered strictly to the Ḥanafī school of law or that he used the same intelligence in dealing with religious issues as was characteristic of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa. The latter

[83] Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlawī, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, 81.

[84] Ḥamid Qalandar, *Khair al-Majālis*, ed. by K. A. Nizami (Aligarh, 1959), 157.

[85] *ibid.*; Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān (d. 1384) also condemned kissing of graves and scattering of rose petals on them: Husain, *Sirāj al-Hidāya*, ed. Qadi Sajjad Husain (Delhi, 1983).

[86] *Tafsīr-i Sūrah-i Ikhlās*. Urdu translation by Maulwi Ghulam Rabbani, (Lahore, AH 1344), 161 f.

[87] Hamid Qalandar, *Khair al-Majālis*, 238.

[88] *ibid.*, 194–5, 239.

[89] *ibid.*, 239.

[90] *Al-Wasilah*, Urdu translation by Malihābādī (Lahore, A.H. 1342), 41.

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interpretation seems more probable because his spiritual mentor Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā had advocated direct recourse to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth for tackling religious issues.

Ṣāfī al-Dīn al-Hindī's debates in Damascus

Ṣāfī al-Dīn al-Hindī (1246–1315), born and brought up in Delhi, settled in Damascus. He was looked upon as the leader of the Shāfī'ite and Ash'arite scholars of his day.[91] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim, a distinguished follower of Ibn Taimiyya, was his pupil and had lived with him till his death. Ṣāfī al-Dīn challenged Ibn Taimiyya's views on anthropomorphism and had public debates with him in Damascus. Some of these debates were arranged by the government of Syria, and had official support. Notwithstanding Ṣāfī al-Dīn's eminence as a scholar and jurist, he could not stop the impact of forces which Ibn Taimiyya had released. How Ṣāfī al-Dīn al-Hindī's views were received in India is not known.

After Muḥammad bin Tughluq

Though Ibn Taimiyya is not explicitly mentioned in the religious literature of early medieval India, his impact is discernible in some of the trends of the period. Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī (1564–1624), popularly known as Mujaddid-i Alf Thānī, makes no reference to Ibn Taimiyya in his writings but his criticism of Ibn al-'Arabī's *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of the noumenal and the phenomenal) established his intellectual identity with Ibn Taimiyya. Perhaps confronted by similar situations, Ibn Taimiyya and Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī regarded *waḥdat al-wujūd*, as a source of confusion in religious thought. Of course, Shaikh Aḥmad's faith in mysticism as a means to invigorate spiritual life remained strong. Nevertheless, he made the *Sharī'a* the main prop of his spiritual discipline and openly criticised Sufis who strayed from it. This adaptation, conscious or unconscious, of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology to the South Asian situation, had far-reaching effects on subsequent religious developments in the region. Ibn al-'Arabī's thought was rejected, mystic discipline strengthened, and the erratic behaviour of the pseudo-mystics condemned.

[91] He was born in Delhi in 1246 and educated there. He left India at the age of 23 and after visiting several Muslim countries settled in Damascus. His Indian accent in pronunciation continued till the last. For his life: Ibn Taqi al-Dīn Subki, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'ya al-Kubra* (Cairo, AH 1324), Ibn Ḥajar Asqalānī, *al-Durrar al-Kaminah* (Hyderabad, 2nd ed., 1982). A detailed account appeared in Urdu in *Ma'ārif* (Azamgarh, March 1943), 165–180.

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SHAH WĀLĪ ALLAH AND IBN TAIMIYYA

It was in the eighteenth century, when Shah Wālī Allah (1702–1763) was prominent on the South Asian intellectual scene, and Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhāb in the Arab world, that Ibn Taimiyya's thought came to be seriously studied in academic circles. Shah Wālī Allah's stay in Ḥijāz afforded him thorough insight into the thought of Ibn Taimiyya of which his teacher, Shaikh Abū Ṭahir Kurdī of Madina, was an ardent advocate. But the latter was an admirer of Ibn al-ʿArabī as well as Ibn Taimiyya. Shāh Wālī Allah imbibed this approach of evaluating conflicting ideological positions in an objective and dispassionate manner.

Ibn Taimiyya's impact on Shāh Wālī Allah's thought is clearly discernible in some of his writings. His discussion of *khilāfa* and *khilāfa al-Rashida* in *Izālat al-Khifa* and *Qurrat al-ʿAynayn* echo the ideas propounded in Ibn Taimiyya's *Minhāj al-Sunnah*; while some of his discussions in *Ḥujjat Allah al-Baligha* seem inspired by Ibn Taimiyya's *Fatāwa*.[92] Similarly, Shah Wālī Allah's campaign against *bidʿāt*, emphasis on *ijtihād* and involvement in the political struggles of the time[93] are not unrelated to Ibn Taimiyya's teaching on these questions.

Makhdūm Muḥammad Muʿīn Sindhī, author of *Darāsat al-Labīb*, wrote to Shāh Wālī Allah, seeking his opinion about some of the views of Ibn Taimiyya. Shāh Wālī Allah wrote in reply:

> My approach about all Muslim religious thinkers is that they are *ʿudūl*, that is, they possess correct faith and proper conduct. This is as the Prophet has said: 'In every age people with piety and faith will represent [interpret] the religion.' They may believe in certain things on which there may not be unanimity, but if such matters of their belief are not against the clear Qur'ānic injunctions, the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the consensus of the community (*ijmāʿ*), [criticism of them is not justified]. Our assessment of Ibn Taimiyya after full investigation is that he was a scholar of the 'Book of God' and had full command over its etymological and juristic implications. He remembered by heart the traditions of the Prophet and accounts of elders (*salaf*) and understood well their etymological and juristic purpose and meaning. He was a recognized scholar of syntax (*naḥw*) and semantics (*lughat*). He was an authority on the Hanbalite jurisprudence and its principles and branches. He excelled in intelligence and brilliance. He argued in defence of *ahl al-Sunnah* with great eloquence and force. No innovation or irreligious act is reported about him. Only certain matters on which he was harassed by his contemporaries have been reported to us. But there is not a single matter on which he is without his defence based on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. *So it is difficult to find a man in the whole world who possesses the qualities of Ibn Taimiyya.* No one can come anywhere near him in

[92] Compare, for instance: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, (134–40) and *Qurrat al-ʿAynayn*, (236–46).

[93] See *Shāh Wālī Allah kay Siyāsi Maktūbāt*, ed. K. A. Nizami, (Delhi, 1969).

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the force of his speech and writing. People who harassed him [and got him thrown in prison] did not possess even one-tenth of his scholarly excellence ... In this matter the differences of the *'ulamā'* resemble the differences of the Companions of the Prophet and it is necessary to abstain from making any comments on such matters.[94]

Shah Wālī Allah then referred item by item to objections against Ibn Taimiyya—his anthropomorphic ideas, his views about visiting the tomb of the Prophet, his position vis-à-vis *Quṭb, Ghawth, Khiżr*, etc, and his assessment of the Caliph 'Alī—and showed that, though one might disagree, Ibn Taimiyya could not be charged with blasphemy or heresy on that account. He concluded: 'I exhort Muslims in the name of God, against maligning him as *'ālim* and *mujtahid* on such matters of difference of opinion.'

This defence of Ibn Taimiyya's ideological position had an impact on contemporary religious thought in South Asia. As his seminary, *Madrasah-i-Raḥīmya*, was the hub of intellectual life in the country, ideas adumbrated there quickly flowed to wider academic circles. Shāh Walī Allah's son, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz, seems to have been impressed by Ibn Taimiyya's commentary on *Surat al-Nūr* in his *Bustān al-Muhaddithīn*, but in *Fatāwā-i 'Azīzī*, he appears critical of some of his views.

IMPACT OF IBN TAIMIYYA'S IDEAS ON CERTAIN REFORMIST MOVEMENTS

The Farā'iżī and the Mujāhidīn movements which arose in India during the 18th–19th centuries held certain positions inspired by the teachings of Ibn Taimiyya. Local conditions and individual preferences accentuated one or the other aspect of his thought, but in their emphasis on the doctrine of *tawḥīd* and the spirit of *jihād*, these movements[95] stood on the same ground as, and drew inspiration from, Ibn Taimiyya.

The Farā'iżī movement, whatever its genesis, came under the influence of Wahhābī ideology when its leaders went to the Ḥijāz and came into

[94] *Maktubāt-i Shāh Wālī Allah* (Ahmadi Press, Delhi), 26–9.

[95] During the British period—particularly soon after 1857—the word *Wahhābī* came to be regarded as synonymous with 'rebel' and 'mutineer'. (See W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (London, 1872). Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān had to use much ingenuity to save the Wahhābī movement in India from British fury. He divested it of its political trappings and emphasized its religious objectives and ideals, particularly the spirit of *ijtihād*. The literature produced in South Asia during the nineteenth century on the subject of *jihād* provides an interesting insight into the currents and cross-currents of ideological conflict.

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contact with eminent religious figures of Arabia. Haji Sharī'at Allah stayed in Arabia for 20 years (1799–1818) and received his education there. He could not but be influenced by Wahhābī ideas about adherence to the montheistic ideal of Islam and stern rejection of *bid'āt*. But the Farā'iżīs professed strict adherence to the Hanafī school of law, and did not reject mysticism as a source of spiritual enlightenment.[96]

The views of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd (1786–1831) leader of the Mujāhidīn movement, are carefully collected in *Sirāt-i Mustaqīm*, compiled by Shāh Muḥammad Isma'īl and Maulānā 'Abd al-Ḥayy. It contains a powerful denunciation of *bid'āt*, and criticises many Sufi practices. An effort to recover the true spirit of *aḥsān* is made by laying down the basic principles of the *Tarīqa-i Muhammadiya*, shaking off the unauthorized accretions in mystic life, and adhering to spiritual disciplines closer to the spirit of the Sunnah.

Among the followers of Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd were men who had received their education in the Ḥijāz under Wahhābī scholars. Maulvi Walayat 'Alī 'Azīmābādī had learnt Ḥadīth with Qadi Shaukani, a well-known Wahhābī scholar. Unlike the Farā'iżīs who were deeply attached to the Ḥanafī school, the Mujāhidīn renounced *taqlīd*. In sum, while all these reformist movements were influenced one way or another by the ideas of Ibn Taimiyya, none adopted Ibn Taimiyya's approach towards mysticism. Rather, in securing their position all adopted mystic practices of initiation (*bay't*), *khilāfa* and spiritual training.

Sir Syed and rejection of taqlīd

Sir Syed Ahmad Khān (1817–1898) founder of the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College', 'the first modernist organization in Islam',[97] later to develop into the Aligarh Muslim University, imbibed many traits of Ibn Taimiyya's thought. His *Rah-i Sunnat wa Radd-i Bid'at* gives an idea of his religious approach from the very beginning. He rejected *taqlīd*[98] in favour of *ijtihād* according to the needs of the time. He even spoke of the need for a new *'ilm al-kalām* to meet the exigencies of the situation. He called himself an 'inveterate Wahhābi.'[99] He rejected all concepts of *turk-i duniya* (renunciation of the world), emphasized the need of a *mujtahid* in every age,[100] and declared fictitious and fabricated all *aḥādīth* about the Mahdi.[101] One cannot fail to discern the influence of

[96] *Al-Wasīlah* (Urdu trans.), 41.

[97] H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (London, 1957), 181.

[98] *Khutūt-i Sir Syed*, ed. Syed Ross Masood, (Badaon, 1931), 54–5.

[99] *ibid.*, 169.

[100] Sir Syed, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (Aligarh, n d.), ii, 182.

[101] *ibid.*, 376.

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Maulāna Isma'īl Shahīd[102] so far as his attitude towards *taqlīd*[103] and *bid'at* is concerned. His attitude towards *taqlīd* finds a very cogent exposition in Chirāgh 'Alī's *Proposed political, legal and social reforms under Muslim rule.*

Nawāb Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khan

After Shāh Wālī Allah, the most powerful advocate of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology was Nawāb Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān (1832–1890),[104] a veteran scholar and prolific writer from Bhopal. His teacher, Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith of Benares, was a pupil of Qāḍī Shaukānī. He strove hard to propagate Ibn Taimiyya's ideas and, moreover, to remove misunderstandings by presenting them in their proper historical perspective. His *Itāhaf al-Nubalā*,[105] *Abjād al-'Ulūm*;[106], *Taqsār*,[107] and *al-Tāj al-Mukallal*[108] contain eloquent tributes to Ibn Taimiyya's contribution to Islamic thought. He considered him and his pupil Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyīm as the *mujaddids* of the seventh century AH:

> The *mujaddids* for the seventh century are Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taimiyya and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim. The efforts of these two elders towards reform and resurrection have no equal among the preceding or the following generations. A vast number of Islamic literary works, particularly historical and biographical, are full of references to him [Ibn Taimiyya].[109]

Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān had Nu'mān Alūsi's *Jalā' al-'Aynayn* published in Cairo. He strengthened the ideological prominence of Ibn Taimiyya by undertaking the publication of a number of works which either elucidated his thought or provided ideological arguments for defending his religious views. But the circumstances of Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān's life did not admit of any application of Ibn Taimiyya's ideas in the political sphere; he concentrated his attention on rejection of *taqlīd*, return to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth as sources of law, and rejection of *bid'āt*. He was in touch with the *'ulamā'* of Ḥadīth in Yemen and

[102] Syed Ross Masood, (ed.) *Khutūt-i Sir Syed*, 37, 65, 169.

[103] See Hali, *Hayāt-i Jāvid* (Kanpur, 1901).

[104] For detailed account of his life, see *Ma'āthir-i Ṣiddīqi* (Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, 1924–5, 4 vols.) by his son, Nawāb Muḥammad 'Alī Hasan Khān.

[105] Sayyid Muhammad Ṣiddīq Hasan Khān, *Itāhaf al-Nubalā* (Kanpur, 1288/1871).

[106] Sayyid Muḥammad Siddīq Hasan Khān, *Abjād al-'Ulūm* (Bhopal, AH 1295).

[107] Sayyid Muhammad Siddīq Hasan Khān, *Taqsār* (Bhopal, AH 1298).

[108] Sayyid Muḥammad Siddīq Hasan Khān, *al-Taj al-mukallal* (Bhopal, AH 1299).

[109] Sayyid Muhammad Siddīq Ḥasan Khān, *Ḥajjaj al-Karama fī Athar al-Qayyāma* (n.d.), 136–7.

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through them kept himself fully informed of the numerous works of Ibn Taimiyya and his distinguished followers.

Amritsar: A centre for the study of Ibn Taimiyya

Almost at the same time when Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān was busy popularizing Ibn Taimiyya's works in Bhopal, Amritsar came into prominence as another centre of studies pertaining to Ibn Taimiyya. It attracted the attention of scholars like Maulānā Muhammad, Maulānā 'Abd al-Jabbar, Maulānā 'Abd al-Rahim, and Maulānā 'Abd al-Wāḥid. All of them belonged to what is known as the Ghaznawi school. They established contact with the *'ulamā'* of Najd through some Bombay merchants and kept themselves informed of the works of the Shaikh al-Islām. They had some of them published, began to give instruction in them and generally applied themselves to the zealous propagation of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology. They evaded the element of *jihād* in Ibn Taimiyya's thought but stressed the importance of Ḥadīth in articulating the spirit of *ijtihād*.

Maulānā Nādhīr Ḥusain Muḥaddith

Maulānā Nādhīr Ḥusain (d. 1902) who taught in Delhi for more than half a century, was a pupil of Shāh Muḥammad Isḥāq, grandson of Shah 'Abd al-'Azīz, and was considered leader of the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* in India.[110] Influenced by Wahhābī ideology, he nevertheless, in his attitude towards Ibn al-'Arabī, followed the tradition of Shāh Walī Allāh. It is difficult to say if the Ambala sedition case against him (1864–5) was based on mere suspicion as he had contact with the *'ulamā'* of Sādiqpur or if he had actually been involved in *jihād*. However, in his later years—after the Ambala case—he was mainly concerned with rejection of *taqlīd* and recourse to Qur'ān and Ḥadīth as primary sources of Muslim law.

Significantly, all admirers of Ibn Taimiyya in India during the post-1857 period presented his views purely in terms of *ijtihād* and said nothing about his ideas regarding *jihād*.

Shibli on Ibn Taimiyya

In 1908 Maulānā Shibli (d. 1914) wrote an article in *al-Nadwa* under the caption: 'Allāma Ibn Taimiyya Ḥarrānī as a *mujaddid* of his century'. He indicated three essential qualifications for a *mujaddid*:

[110] For his role in *Ahl al-Hadīth* movement, see Muhammad Ibrahīm Mīr Siyālkotī, *Tarīkh-i Ahl-i Hadīth*, (Lahore, 1953), 425–35.

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1. He should bring about a purposeful revolution in religion, or in learning or in politics.
2. His reformist ideas should be the outcome of *ijtihād*, not *taqlīd*.
3. He should have endured physical suffering in the pursuit of his ideal.

Shibli found all these qualities in Ibn Taimiyya and considered him superior to many outstanding figures in the history of Islam.[111] Shiblī was the first to study Ibn Taimiyya's political role. This was a departure from the trend represented by Sir Syed, Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan, and Maulānā Nādhīr Husain who had presented Ibn Taimiyya primarily as a religious reformer. Shibli wished to include Ibn Taimiyya in his *Heroes of Islam Series* but was unable to undertake further work on him.

Influence on Maulānā Azad

Emphasis on Ḥadīth studies and rejection of *taqlīd* continued to be considered the only aims of Ibn Taimiyya's movement until Maulānā Abul Kalām Azād (1888–1958) appeared on the Indian intellectual scene and looked to Ibn Taimiyya for inspiration to restore to the Muslims in India the mettle necessary for a struggle against foreign domination.

Perhaps no Indian scholar understood the role of Ibn Taimiyya in the history of Islam with such clarity and conviction as did Maulānā Azād. In his struggle against British rule, he drew inspiration from Ibn Taimiyya who had guided the Muslims of his day when political power had passed out of their hands. Apart from his own independent study of Ibn Taimiyya's works, Maulānā Azād's contact with the Alūsī family of Baghdad, whose advocacy of Ibn Taimiyya's ideology was of long standing, confirmed him in his views. Nu'mān al-Alūsī (d. 1899) had written, *Jala' al-'Aynayn*[112] which defends Ibn Taimiyya against charges of unorthodoxy.[113] Besides, Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Mahmūd Alūsī's *tafsīr*, *Rūh al-Ma'ānī*, bore the unmistakable imprint of Ibn Taimiyya's views. Maulānā Azād's father, Maulānā Khair al-Dīn had criticised Shaikh Alūsī for his views and written a critique of his commentary. He particularly criticised Alūsī's denial (following Ibn Taimiyya) of the existence of the Prophet Khiżr. Maulānā Azād abandoned his father's

[111] *Maqālāt-i Shiblī*, v, 62–76.

[112] Cairo, 1298/1880–81.

[113] Albert Hourani considers it 'a sign of the influence which such ideas were now beginning to exercise over educated Muslims of different traditions.' *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Cambridge, 1983), 222.

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stance in favour of Alūsī's view in respect of Ibn Taimiyya. This surprised even the Alusis,[114] and established Maulānā Azād as an independent thinker unfettered by family traditions.

Ibn Taimiyya's influence on Maulānā Azād was not confined to explicitly religious matters. Azād considered Ibn Taimiyya's diagnosis of the social and political ills of Muslim society very relevant to the situation prevailing in his day. Anxious to organize the Muslims, he cited Ibn Taimiyya as his ideal and urged the need for an *imām* to organize the community. His life during internment at Ranchi resembled, as Maulānā Sayyid Sulaimān Nadwī remarked, that of Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyīm.[115] Addressing a meeting of the *'ulamā'*, Azad said that what Ibn Taimiyya had done when the Muslim society was faced with the problem of resurrecting the structure of Islamic institutions—political, religious and cultural—provided a model for modern times. He remarked:

> The first thing that the *'ulamā'* of those times did was to appoint Muslim deputies over the territories which the Mongols had occupied, with the purpose of organizing the community and establishing the *Sharī'a* law ... Shaikh-al-Islām Ibn Taimiyya gave a *fatwā* about the areas under Mongol control that the Muslims of those lands should not accept that change and should not for a moment live without an *imām*.[116]

Maulānā Azād strove for some years to popularise the idea of an *imām* as the centre of community life. He established *Dār al-Irshād* as a nursery for training people in those ideals. He founded an organization known as Ḥizb Allāh, based on this concept of *imamate*. In *Tadhkirah*, published in 1919, he drew a lively, vibrant picture of Ibn Taimiyya, focused on the man's sincerity and determination to revive Muslim society regardless of the opposition and hardship that he had to face[117]

Maulānā Azād's bold acceptance of Ibn Taimiyya's ideological position dispelled many misunderstandings about Ibn Taimiyya and a new phase began in the intellectual history of Muslim India characterized by close study and numerous translations of his works in Urdu. Azād himself translated *al-Wasīyat al-Kubra* into Urdu,[118] and, under his influence, Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, 'Abd al-Majīd Sālik and 'Abd al-Razzāq Malīhābādī became ardent admirers of Ibn Taimiyya and propagated his views through their journals, magazines and newspapers.

[114] Abūl Kalām Azād, *Karawān-i Khayāl* (Bijnor, 1946), 77.
[115] *Ma'ārif*, March 1919.
[116] Presidential Address, Jamiat al-'Ulamā', Lahore Session, (1921).
[117] *Tadhkirah* (Lahore, 1919), 158.
[118] Lahore, 1947.

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Iqbāl's assessment of Ibn Taimiyya's legal and philosophic concepts

If Azād looked to Ibn Taimiyya for the revitalization of Muslim community and its political prestige, Iqbāl (d. 1938) looked to him for a reconstruction of Muslim religious thought inspired by a revived spirit of *ijtihād*. He assessed Ibn Taimiyya's role from different angles, philosophic, legal, and reformist. Systematic refutation of Greek logic, Iqbāl argued, was really undertaken by Ishrāqī and Ibn Taimiyya, and he drew attention to the latter's *Refutation of Logic*, in which induction is described as 'the only form of reliable argument'.[119]

Referring to the destruction of Baghdad, the centre of Muslim intellectual life in the middle of the thirteenth century, and the tendency for false reverence for past history, Iqbāl said:

The tendency of over-organization by a false reverence of the past as manifested in the legists of Islam in the thirteenth century and later, was contrary to the inner impulse of Islam and consequently invoked the powerful reaction of Ibn-i Taimiyya, one of the most indefatigable writers and preachers of Islam ...[120]

Iqbāl referred approvingly to Ibn Taimiyya's revolt against the finality of the schools of law and supported his attempt to go back to first principles in order to make a fresh start. Ibn Taimiyya rejected, writes Iqbāl, the Hanafī principle of reasoning by analogy and *ijmāʿ* (consensus) as understood by the older legists, for 'he thought agreement was the basis of all superstition.'[121] Iqbāl came to the conclusion that 'considering the moral and intellectual decrepitude of his times, he was right in doing so.'

Iqbāl saw the Wahhābī movement in the context of the impact of Ibn Taimiyya's ideas. He wrote:

... the spirit of Ibn-i Taimiyya's teaching found a fuller expression in a movement of immense potentialities which arose in the eighteenth century, from the sand of Nejd, described by MacDonald as the 'cleanest spot in the decadent world of Islam'. *It is really the first throb of life in modern Islam.*

In *Islam and Ahmadism* Iqbāl refers to Ibn Taimiyya as a critic of 'mullāh rigidity.'[122] He looked upon 'mullāh-ism', which would not allow any freedom of *ijtihād*, as the real cause of Muslim stagnation and remarked:

The Wahhābī movement which was a source of inspiration to the 19th century Muslim reformers was really a revolt against the rigidity of the *'ulamā'*.[123]

[119] *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1944), 129.
[120] *ibid.*, 151–2. [121] *ibid.*
[122] 'Islam and Ahmadism', *Islam* (Lahore, 22 January, 1936) vol. I, No. 16, 36–7.
[123] *ibid.*, 31–2.

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Iqbāl was particularly impressed by the spirit of *ijtihād* which had characterized the approach of Ibn Taimiyya; Azād looked to him for guidance in organizing the Muslim community under the overall authority of an *imām*. The two approaches, though not divergent or conflicting, were never combined in the larger framework of any movement for the regeneration of Muslim society. Maulānā Azād gave up his efforts to establish the authority of an *imām*; Iqbāl's ideas about *ijtihād*, though understood by few, were acted upon by none.

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Impact on scholars of Nadwa

From the early twentieth century, as we have noted, a number of *'ulamā'* became interested in the works of Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyīm. Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, Maulānā Shiblī, and Maulānā Abul Kalām Azād were largely responsible for creating this interest. Maulānā Sayyid Sulaimān Nadwī recalled that when he got hold of the works of Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyīm, 'every other impression disappeared from his heart' and 'every other colour completely faded away'.[124] As Director of the Shiblī Academy, he was able to enthuse his pupils with admiration for the works of Ibn Taimiyya.

Maulānā Sayyid 'Abd al-'Alī, Nāẓim of Nadwat al-'Ulamā', zealous for the works of Ibn Taimiya and Ibn Qayyīm, repeatedly urged his younger brother, Maulānā Abul Ḥasan Alī, to study them closely.[125] Another teacher at Nadwa, Maulānā Shāh Halīm 'Ata, appreciated especially the clear, cogent and powerful exposition of Islamic monotheism in the writings of Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyīm. He particularly admired Ibn Taimiyya's *Madārij al-Sālikīn, al-Jawāb al-Kafī, Zād al-Ma'ād*, and *'Idā al-Ṣābirīn*. Excepting Ibn Taimiyya's views about *Ahl al-Bait*, as expressed in *Minhāj al-Sunnah*,[126] he upheld the Imām's arguments in almost every other respect. He would advise his students that if anybody had not the time to read all the works of Ibn Taimiyya, he should at least study his *Fatāwā* and *Majmū'at al-Rasā'il* which contain the essence of his thought.[127]

Maulānā Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī regards Ibn Taimiyya's *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Nūr* and Ibn Qayyim's *Jawab al-Kāfī* as the best guides for young minds.[128] In 1957 he wrote a comprehensive account of Ibn Taimiyya in his *Tārīkh-i Da'wat wa'Aẓīmat*,[129] stressing his efforts to revive the religious zeal of the community. He propagated Ibn Taimiyya's

[124] *Mashāhir Ahl-i 'Ilm ki Mohsin Kitābain*, ed. Maulānā Muhammad 'Imrān Khān (Karachi, 1979), p. 18.
[125] *ibid.*, 106.
[126] *ibid.*, 106–7.
[127] *ibid.*, 108.
[128] *ibid.*, 175.
[129] Tarīkh-i Da'wat wa'Azimat (Azamgarh, 1957), ii.

ideology without bringing it into clash with the religious psychology of the Muslims in South Asia.

Deoband and Ibn Taimiyya

The early scholars of Deoband—Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nanautawī (d. 1880) and others—did not envince any interest in Ibn Taimiyya's teachings. Interest in them began only with Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (d. 1933),[130] who studied very carefully the works of Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyīm. Assisted by a prodigious memory, he would cite passage after passage while discoursing on the works of Ibn Taimiyya. He passed on to his pupils[131] his own enthusiasm for and commitment to Ibn Taimiyya. This is evident in the works for example, of Maulānā Muḥammad Manẓoor Nu'mānī (editor *al-Furqān*), Maulānā Sa'id Aḥmad Akbarābādī (editor *Burhān*) and others. Anwar Shāh quoted in his writings from Ibn Taimiyya's *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Sarīm al-Maslul 'alā Shatim al-Rasūl* and paid tribute to him as a mountain of knowledge (*jabal al-'ilm*). He was, however, critical of some of the views of Ibn Taimiyya.

Among others, Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad of Sahāranpur and Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad Uthmānī, while not hesitating to refer to Ibn Taimiyya and Ibn Qayyīm, did not commit themselves to their ideology. Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānwī expressed his disagreement with Ibn Taimiyya in moderate, polite language, refraining from entering into open rebuttal of his views.

Maulānā Ḥusain Aḥmad Madanī made no secret of his disagreement with the views of Ibn Taimiyya. Maulānā Manāẓir Aḥsan Gilānī, an alumnus of Deoband, who later chaired the Department of Theology at the Osmānia University of Hyderabad, was also sceptical of Ibn Taimiyya's views. His article, *Ibn Taimiyya ka Nazariya-i Makhdūmiyat*[132] is a critique of Ibn Taimiyya's *al-Nabuwwat.*[133]

LITERATURE IN URDU

A number of Ibn Taimiyya's books and brochures were translated into Urdu and published from Lahore, Calcutta, Lyalpur and other places by

[130] For his life, see: Muhammad Riżwān Allah, *Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī* (Aligarh, 1974); Muḥammad Azhar Shāh, *Ḥayāt-i Anwar* (Delhi, 1955); 'Abd al-Rahmān Kondo, *Al-Nūr* (Delhi, 1979).

[131] e.g. Maulānā Sa'īd Ahmad Akbarabādī. See *Mashāhir Ahl-i 'Ilm ki Mohsin Kitābain*, 78.

[132] The word *makhdūm* has a technical meaning in this context. It is used for one who controls the *jinn*.

[133] See *Maqālat-i Aḥsānī* (Karachi, 1959), 369–91.

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the *'ulamā'* committed to fighting *bid'āt* and restoring the practical supremacy of the *Sharī'a* in Muslim life. Particularly noteworthy Urdu translations are: *'Uṣūl al-Tafsīr* (Lahore, 1374 AH); *Tafsir Sūrah al-Ikhlās* (Lahore, 1344 AH); *Tafsīr al-Ma'dhutain* (Dar al-Tarjuma, Lahore, n.d.); *Ziyārat al-Qubūr* (Lahore, 1347 AH); *Al-Farq bain Auliya al-Raḥmān wa Auliyā al-Shaiṭān* (Lahore, 1930); *Risāla fi Darajat al-Yaqīn* (Lahore, 1347 AH); *Risāla fi al-Sama' wa 'l-Raqs* (Lahore, 1946); *al-Waṣīyat al-Kubrā* (Lahore, 1947); *al-Waṣīyat al-Ṣughrā; Tafsir Sūrah al-Kauthar* (Lahore, n.d.); *Kitāb al-Tawāsul al–Wasīlah* (Lahore, 1951); *Tafsīr Ayāt al-Karīma* (Lahore, n.d.); *'Itaba al-Rasul la Ṣaḥīḥ al-Uqul* (Lahore, n.d.); *Al-Wasīlah bain al–Khalq wal–Haqq* (Al-Hilāl Book Agency, Lahore, n.d.); *Mānasik-i Ḥajj* (Lahore, n.d.); *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffah* (Lahore, 1932); *Fatwā Shirk Shikan* (Lahore, n.d.); *Rafa' al-Malām 'an al-Aimma al-'Alām* (Lahore, n.d.); *Khilāf al-Ummah* (Lahore, n.d.); *Ifādat-i Ibn Taimiyya* (containing several brochures, Lyalpur, n.d.); *Risāla Wajd wa Sama'* (Lahore, 1946); *Manāẓira Ibn Taimiyya* (Lahore, n.d.); *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* (Calcutta, n.d.); *Aqīda Hamwiya* (Lahore, n.d.); *al-Aqīda al-Wasīlah* (Lahore, n.d.); *Ma'ārij al-Wuṣūl Lahore, n.d.); Risāla al-Qabrasiya* (Lahore, n.d.); *Risāla al-'Ubūdiya* (Abbotabad, 1922); *al-Kalīm al-Tayyib* (Hyderabad, n.d.); *Fī Ithbāt Karāmāt al-Auliyā* (Calcutta, n.d.); *Al-Sufīyah wal Fuqāra* (Lahore, n.d.).

The titles give an idea of the main areas of interest and involvement. These translations made the Muslims of South Asia directly familiar with the basic categories of Ibn Taimiyya's thought. Similarly, some of the works of Ibn Qayyim, who was regarded as an exponent of Ibn Taimiyya's thought, were also translated into Urdu. His *Shifā' al-'Alīl* was translated into Urdu and published by Maulwi Karīm Bakhsh of Lahore under the title *Kitab al-Taqdīr* (no date).

A well-known Urdu scholar who popularized Ibn Taimiyya's views and highlighted his role in the history of Islam was Maulānā Akbar Shāh Khān Najībābādī.[134] The first comprehensive biography of Ibn Taimiyya in Urdu, published by Afẓāl al-'Ulamā'Muḥammad Yusūf Kokān 'Umari from Madras in 1959, has helped to make possible a clearer appraisal of Ibn Taimiyya's role in Islamic history.

Maulāna Abū al-'Alā' al-Mawdūdī, who wrote prolifically in Urdu on different aspects of religion and polity, was influenced by Ibn Taimiyya's approach in his interpretation of Islamic history, rejection of *taqlīd*, bridging the gulf between religion and politics and in his criticism of the Sufi ways of life. However, he did not, in general, explicitly indicate the sources of his inspiration.

Certain sections of *'ulamā'* and *mashaikh* were bitterly critical of Ibn

[134] e.g. see his *A'ina-i Haqīqat Numa* (Hamdard Press, Delhi, n.d.), ii.

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Taimiyya's views about mysticism and *taqlīd*,[135] but their polemical writings have had only limited influence.

THE NATURE OF IBN TAIMIYYA'S IMPACT IN SOUTH ASIA

In South Asia Ibn Taimiyya's influence can be distinguished in six distinct spheres:

(a) as a model for the resurrection of Muslim society (*iḥyā-i millat*);
(b) as an organizer of *jihād* movement against the Mongols;
(c) as an advocate of *ijtihād*, (fresh interpretation of Islamic law);
(d) as a critic of *bid'āt* (innovations in different spheres of Muslim life);
(e) as a critic of the Sufis in general, and
(f) as a critic of Ibn al-'Arabī.

South Asia accepted Ibn Taimiyya's role as a reformer, as an advocate of *ijtihād*, as an uncompromising monotheist, as a critic of *bid'āt* and as an inspiration in the struggle against foreign political domination. However, his views were diversely adopted and emphasized according to the needs of the period. Excepting the rule of Muḥammad bin Tughluq, it did not prove possible to apply the whole of Ibn Taimiyya's thought at any other period.

It was as a reformer and critic of *bid'āt* that Ibn Taimiyya's impact was most deeply felt in South Asia. Hardly any Muslim reform movement arose in India that did not owe some inspiration to him in its struggle against unauthorized accretions in Muslim society.

Ibn Taimiyya's ideas played an important role in the political sphere during the 14th, 19th, and the early 20th centuries. Muhammad bin Tughluq adopted his views as his political ideology; the Farā'izī, the Wahhābī and the Mujāhidīn movements imbibed the spirit of *jihād* from him, directly or indirectly. Maulānā Azād was inspired by him in his struggle for independence from British rule. He sought to revitalise Muslim society by creating an effective organisational structure under an *imām*, as advocated by Ibn Taimiyya.

Ibn Taimiyya's criticism of Ibn Al-'Arabī's *waḥdat al-wujūd*, was echoed in Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī's approach towards pantheistic tendencies.[136] Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi, who always strongly defended Ibn Taimiyya against all types of criticism, was, however, conciliatory in

[135] e.g. see Shams al-Dīn Afghānī's *al-Jawāhir al-Bahhiya*, a commentary on *Sharḥ 'Aqaid al-Nasafī*.

[136] See Burhān Aḥmad Farūqī, *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawḥīd* (Lahore, 1940).

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this matter. His *Risāla fī Taḥqīq Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (also known as *al-Maktūb al-Madanī*) gave a new orientation to mystical thought in South Asia. Following the guidance of his teacher, Shaikh Abū Tāhir Kurdi of Madina, Shāh Walī Allāh made the reformist programme of Ibn Taimiyya co-exist with Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideology. As a result even those who subscribed to Ibn Taimiyya's thought in other spheres, accepted Ibn al-ʿArabī's lead in spiritual matters.

Ibn Taimiyya had written about innumerable problems pertaining to the religious, social, and political life of the contemporary Muslims. A reformer working in such a vast orbit could not help touching many sensitive areas and provoking many controversies. Obviously some of the controversies were of a temporary nature and of lesser significance, but the opposition they aroused clouded clear appreciation of his reformist role in the broader framework of Islamic history and the dynamic elements in his thought were not understood.

The ideology of Ibn Taimiyya vis-à-vis mysticism was restated in South Asia. However, none of its supporters—Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī Mujaddid Alf-i Thānī, Shāh Walī Allāh, the Farā'iżīs, the Mujāhidīn, Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, the schools of Nadwa and Deoband—were able to dispense with mystic thought or institutions. In fact, they saw in the revitalization of mystic life the seeds of regeneration for the *millat*. Nevertheless, some significant steps were taken to meet the objections of Ibn Taimiyya. (1) Sufis who did not conform to the *Sharīʿa* were severely condemned by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī[137] and Shāh Walī Allāh.[138] (2) The mystic movement was presented as an elaboration of the spirit of *ahsān* as explained by the Prophet. (3) Ibn Taimiyya had categorised Sufis as *Auliyā Allāh* (Helpers of God) or *Auliyā Shaiṭān* (Helpers of the Devil). Careful scrutiny of the attitudes and behaviour of the eminent *auliyā* in South Asia of various affiliations reveals that Ibn Taimiyya's criticism was not applicable to them. They adhered to *Sharīʿa* norms, discouraged *ruhbāniyat* (asceticism), did not publicly discuss *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and upheld the *sunnah* of the Prophet. The delinquent Sufis, who had provoked Ibn Taimiyya's criticism were never taken seriously by the Muslim people—as is evident from the fate of Ahmad Bihārī, Masʿūd Bak, Sarmad, and others. (4) A readjustment and distinction of this type had taken place earlier in Muslim lands during the time of Ibn Taimiyya himself. Malik Asīr Qalādūn, an admirer of Ibn Taimiyya, did not abjure contact with the mystics[139] but continued his affiliation with the mystic

[137] *Maktūbāt-i Imām-i Rabbānī* (Nawal Kishore, 1877).

[138] He writes in his *Waṣiyat Nama*, (Masihi Press of Masih al-Zaman, Kanpur, n.d.), p. 3: 'Don't give your hand in the hand of the mystics of this age as they are involved in variety of *bidʿāt*.'

[139] See Maqrīzī, *al-Khaltat wa 'l-Athar* (Beirut, n.d.), ii, 422.

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order. (5) Perhaps the most significant development in this connection was the line adopted by Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān who took bold and sincere initiatives to propagate Ibn Taimiyya's thought in South Asia. He invested Ibn Taimiyya with mystic attributes,[140] suggested that there was some identity of view between Ibn Taimiyya and Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā[141] and quoted a verse about the need of practicing *ijtihād* that Shaikh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā used to recite before his audience, whose meaning in English may be rendered as: 'Though God alone provides religious guidance, yet one should also exercise *ijtihād*.'[142]

With these adjustments to the different circumstances and religious sensibilities of the Muslims in India borne in mind, we may say that Ibn Taimiyya's ideas have made a deep and far-reaching impression on religious and political developments in South Asia.

[140] *Taqsār Juyūd al-Abrār min Tadhkār-i Janūd al-Abrār*, (Bhopal, AH 1298), wherein he observes about Ibn Taimiyya: 'His rank in spiritual discipline was very high. Stories about his miracles and traditions relating to his spiritual blessing are without limit.'

[141] *ibid.*, 136.

[142] *ibid.*, 67.

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